DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 050 214 UD 011 505

TITLE Advisory Task Force Report to the White House Conference on Youth, 1971.

INSTITUTION White House Conference on Youth, Washington, D.C.

PUB DATE 71

NOTE 16p.; Advisory Task Force Reports for the use of White House Conference on Youth Participants

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29

DESCRIPTORS Dropouts, Educational Attitudes, Educational Change, *Educational Development, Educational Needs, *Educational Opportunities, Equal Education, Exceptional Students, Governance, *Relevance (Education), *Student Attitudes, Student Participation, Student Problems, Teacher Education

IDENTIFIERS *White House Conference On Youth

ABSTRACT

To provide a vehicle by which students could present their views on education, the Education Task Force was established as part of the White House Conference on Youth. The 12 task force members represent diverse backgrounds and educational interests. Although their demands seem quite diverse, a pattern emerged. Most of the topics appeared to fall into three major areas of concern: the need for equal educational opportunity, relevant educational systems, and student participation in educational governance. Three other topics appeared to require special attention: the problems facing exceptional students, the problems facing the dropout and potential dropout, and the need to provide teachers with better preparation. The task force requested six nationally known educators to write position papers concerning the topics. Task force members also attempted to study the attitudes of young people toward education to obtain the views of as many people as possible. They relied on two youth attitude surveys conducted by the White House Conference as well as recent reports by students on education and reports from youth conferences being held across the country. (Author/JM)

ADVISORY TASK FORCE REPORT TO THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON YOUTH,

1971.

ED050214

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

TASK FORCE ON EDUCATION

THE 1971 WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON YOUTH

UD011505

Advisory Task Force Reports for the Use of White House Conference on Youth Participants

EDUCATION TASK FORCE MEMBERS

CO-CHAIRMEN:

John Charles Thomas
Charlottesville, Virginia

Robben W. Fleming
Ann Arbor, Michigan

TASK FORCE MEMBERS:

Susan Randall Albertson
Vermillion, South Dakota

Lynda Ford
Dover, Delaware

Michael Garanzini
St. Louis, Missouri

Philip Jackson
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Steven C. Kastner
Topeka, Kansas

Billie Kazuka Kurumaji
Dinuba, California

Christina Vega
Rosemead, California

Hon. William Clay
St. Louis, Missouri

Gordon McAndrew
Gary, Indiana

Stanly B. Thomas
Washington, D. C.

TASK FORCE COORDINATOR:

Carolyn Boiarsky
Tin-Swe Thant, Research Assistant

(ADVISORY TASK FORCE REPORT TO THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON YOUTH)

PREFACE

Education is one of ten major areas which studies have indicated are of great interest to today's youth. To provide a vehicle by which students could present their views, the Education Task Force was established as part of the White House Conference on Youth. The following advisory report is an attempt by the task force to present an overview of the problems in education concerning today's young people.

The twelve task force members represent diverse backgrounds and educational interests. During the three task force meetings, each member voiced his view of what he felt to be the goals of education, the failures of the present educational system, and the reforms needed in the schools and colleges.

-- According to John Charles Thomas, Youth Co-Chairman of the task force and President of the Black Students for Freedom, racism is still very much a problem and must be eradicated from the schools. John Charles, who is a student at the University of Virginia, Assistant to the Governor of Virginia, and a member of the Governor's Commission on Children and Youth, is also emphatic about the need to recruit large numbers of black students to colleges and universities.

-- Lynda Ford, a former beautician who serves as the Delaware State President of the Vocational Industrial Clubs of America, argued, "Vocational education can't be terminal... There should be no age requirements to get into a course. People should be able to attend classes whenever they want, not just between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. and from September to June.

-- For Stephen Kastner, a junior high school student in Topeka, Kansas, who is confined to a wheelchair, schools need to alter some of their facilities so that handicapped students can attend classes and participate in activities with other students. Steve also feels handicapped students or their parents should be on state boards of education and educational councils because they are the ones who "really know what the problems are."

-- Michael Garanzini, a student at St. Louis University, Missouri, and a member of the Board of Directors of Project 21, a project sponsored by the Danforth Foundation for designing the university of the twenty-first century, is extremely interested in developing relevant courses for students in both secondary schools and colleges. Mike also feels strongly that students should be represented on educational governing boards.

-- Billie Kurumaji, who is a high school senior in Dinuba, California, and who plans to attend a junior college next year, believes, "The schools need to improve counseling. They (counselors) should be available to all students, not just high ranking ones who intend to go on to the university."

-- Mrs. Susan Albertson, a high school English teacher in the Centerville, South Dakota, public schools, feels that people have to decide what kind of schools they want before they can decide what teachers should be like. Sue is also extremely interested in teacher preparation and feels that most of the courses she took in college did not prepare her for the classroom situation as she found it.

-- For Christina Vega, a first year law student at UCLA, who will be working for CRLA this coming summer, people throughout the country, especially those in the East, should learn about the problems confronting Mexican-American students in the Southwest. Chris, who is from Rosemead, California, feels that curricula should be developed to meet the special needs of Chicanos.

-- According to Philip Jackson, a drop-out from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, who is involved in a program to improve youth-police relations and to provide recreational facilities for junior high school students, drop-outs need to have some place to go if they change their minds and decide they want to get more education, someplace where people don't look down on them. Philip suggested mini schools as an example.

-- Robben Fleming, Adult Co-Chairman and President of the University of Michigan, expressed his concern with the present financial crisis which is affecting all institutions of higher education.

-- Stanly Thomas, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Youth and Student Affairs for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, noted that sometimes tenure for teachers and professors has caused schools and colleges to stagnate.

-- The Honorable William Clay, Congressman from St. Louis, Missouri, who is a member of the House of Representatives Education Committee, commented that schools need to find ways to demonstrate to the public what they are accomplishing.

-- Dr. Gordon McAndrew, Superintendent of Schools, Gary, Indiana, noted that communities need to understand what is happening in their schools so that they are willing to support changes, especially those which involve greater freedom for students.

Task force members also complained about the necessity of grades and prerequisites both for admittance to college and graduation from it, and they argued for interdisciplinary courses and permission to take classes in both academic and vocational programs.

It seemed that the changes which needed to be made in the schools were innumerable. However, upon closer scrutiny

task force members recognized a pattern in their demands. Most of the topics which they had been discussing appeared to fall into three major areas of concern: the need for equal educational opportunity, relevant educational systems, and student participation in educational governance. Three other topics appeared to require special attention: the problems facing exceptional students, the problems facing the drop-out and potential drop-out, and the need to provide teachers with better preparation.

The prospect of making recommendations concerning these six areas of concern seemed impossible. To acquire assistance, the task force requested six nationally known educators to write position papers concerning the topics. Three members of the Berkeley California Research and Development Center in Higher Education, Drs. Harold L. Hodgkinson, K. Patricia Cross, and Warren Bryan Martin, wrote papers concerning student participation in the educational decision-making process, equality of educational opportunity, and relevance of educational systems respectively. Because of the vastness of the latter topic, Dr. Edward Joseph Shoben of Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington was also requested to write a paper on relevance. Dr. Raymond C. Hummell of the University of Pittsburgh Learning Research and Development Center wrote the paper on the problems facing the drop-out and Dr. Evelyn Deno of the Council for Exceptional Children

wrote the paper on the problems facing the exceptional student. In addition to these papers, task force members relied on Charles Silberman's book, The Crisis in the Classroom, as well as on a large number of articles, memoranda and studies concerned with recent educational developments.

Task force members also attempted to study the attitudes of young people toward education to obtain the views of as many people as possible. They relied on two youth attitude surveys conducted by the White House Conference as well as recent reports by students on education and reports from youth conferences being held across the country. During the months of December and January, the task force, in cooperation with the Future Teachers of America (FTA), requested FTA clubs across the country to hold meetings to which other students would be invited and to make recommendations concerning the three major areas of concern.

The following advisory report is a synthesis of the position papers, previous research studies and surveys, and the feelings expressed by task force members. However, the ten recommendations which appear at the conclusion of the advisory report are based entirely upon the judgments of the task force members and represent a general consensus not only among the youths, but among the adult members as well.

A back up paper which expands the ideas presented in this advisory report is included in the appendix, along with the six research papers, and the analysis of the FTA survey. Because there is no single right way in which the recommendations can be implemented, the second section of the back-up report offers a variety of alternative programs from which educators, administrators, boards of education, members of the community, and students can select those ideas which best meet their particular needs. Task force members were not in unanimous agreement concerning the many programs presented, but felt all means for implementation should be brought to the public's attention.

The task force is also aware of the financial and political implications involved in implementing many of these recommendations, but members did not feel qualified to consider these aspects of education. However, they hope that those persons in positions to deal with these problems will find ways to do so.

THE BECOMING OF EDUCATION

Advisory Report and Recommendations

The United States is committed to the education of all of its citizens. It is the only country in the world which can make such a boast. Yet it is this very commitment to educate all of the Nation's people that is causing so much anguish. For we are a country of individuals. And in our attempts to educate everyone, we have in actuality, satisfied the needs of only a very small number of persons. We have already done so much, but with every step we have advanced, we have seen more and more clearly how much more we need to do.

When the Education Task Force for the White House Conference on Youth analyzed the various problems besetting the Nation's educational system, it became evident that students, parents, teachers, administrators, culturally different and economically disadvantaged, as well as affluent white citizens are all searching for the same solution - an educational environment to meet the needs of all of the Nation's students so that schools can become more effective places of learning and the Nation and society can once more be at peace with itself.

If this atmosphere can be achieved, the task force believes that not only will each student receive an education which is "relevant" to his needs, but teachers will

be able to return to their roles as tutors and scholars, and administrators will once again be able to concentrate on developing major programs.

If programs are to be developed to create such an atmosphere, American society needs to accept ten basic propositions which go to the very heart of the values and attitudes held by many people in today's technocratic society.

1. The educational system must not only be concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, but also with the acquisition of human understanding.

2. Society must recognize the dignity of every human endeavor and refrain from evaluating people according to an intellectual order based on school subjects and job classifications. Society must offer as much respect and place as much emphasis on training good mechanics, plumbers and woodworkers, as it does on training good dentists, writers and chemical engineers.

3. There is no single "right" educational system which must be imposed upon the youth of the United States. Each system should depend upon the community itself and the needs of the individual student at that time and place.

4. The school building is only a small portion of the learning experience. Education can and does take place in many other ways, and these are as important and should receive as much consideration as that of the formal classroom.

5. Education does not occur only during grades one through twelve and possibly during four to ten years of graduate study. Nor is it confined to the hours of eight to three, Monday through Friday, September to June. But rather learning is a life long process.

6. The tradition that school boards, college trustees, and their administrators, formulate educational policies which teachers carry out and which students passively accept is invalid. Decision-making should be shared among school boards and college trustees, administrators, faculty, students, and the community.

7. Changes which are made in the schools should begin with pre-school training and be carried throughout the elementary grades. Secondary schools cannot function properly if the elementary schools have failed to provide students with the basic skills, an enjoyment in learning, and a humanistic outlook on life.

8. It is no longer valid to require that a person possess a certain degree or credits in a specific course to qualify for a position. There is no reason why a writer or an auto mechanic must have a high school diploma or a teacher of secondary English must have six science credits in order to be certified.

9. Society should recognize that education is a complex process, and the public must be willing to spend time learning about education. Simultaneously researchers, teachers and administrators should accept the responsibility for educating the boards of education and the lay public concerning the educational process.

10. Society should continue to support, both financially and morally, new programs, materials, techniques, and systems, and not demand the educational system accomplish miracles by demonstrating immediate success.

Once these premises are accepted, society can begin to create an educational environment to ameliorate the six areas of concern which the Education Task Force has identified as equal educational opportunity, relevant educational systems and programs, student participation

in the educational decision-making process, the drop-out and potential drop-out, exceptional students, and the preparation of teachers and potential teachers. In an effort to solve these concerns and to provide a relevant and flexible educational environment, the task force submits ten recommendations to the Nation.

In order to implement these recommendations, Federal, State and Local governments at both the legislative and administrative levels need to provide support in the form of financial and human resources. But these recommendations are not for the government alone. Private industry and business must also accept the responsibility for improving the country's educational system by allocating monies and human talent as well as offering its advanced knowledge of management, cost effective procedures, and technological utilization. Educators, too, must become actively involved.

But a major portion of the support must come from the citizens, whose tax dollars pay the salaries of the teachers and administrators, supply the bricks and mortar of the school buildings, and purchase the textbooks, pencils, paper, overhead projectors and computers used for instruction. It is the children of the Nation's taxpayers who sit at the desks and imbibe the knowledge which is presented to them.

And it is through the taxpayer's intercession, whether as an individual or as part of a group, such as the PTA, Kiwanis, or the City Council, that the schools can be influenced to make the changes necessary to improve the present educational system. Therefore, this is a report not only to the President of the United States, but to the American people. It is a plea by the Nation's youth to do what has to be done to provide the kind of education that is needed to make the United States not only a free and democratic country but also a humanistic one.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Schools and colleges must provide equal access to educational opportunities to all students, regardless of socio-economic background, race, sex, age, or geographic location.

   Schools and colleges must also provide for and respect the individual differences of each student who is enrolled by taking into account individual rates and patterns of learning, various cultural, ethnic, and physical differences, and individual preferences. It is not acceptable to expect students to adapt to the culture of the majority.

2. Lifelong learning opportunities on a flexible hourly, daily, and annual schedule must be made available to all who wish to return to school to gain additional knowledge in their career fields, to acquire new knowledge and skills for a new career, to resume a dropped or interrupted education, or to use increased leisure time more constructively. Guidance services should be available for assistance in making any of the above decisions. Given the present situation, special assistance in the form of counseling and other services must also be provided for those students still in school but desiring to drop out.

3. Educational systems and programs must be made relevant to students' needs. Students must be permitted to explore various areas of interest, to learn outside the formal classroom, and to move freely between vocational and academic programs and in and out of school. Courses and learning experiences which offer an understanding into today's society, which provide an insight into living in the twenty-first century, and which give a student an understanding of his own identity and of his relationship with society should also become an important and integral part of the learning environment.

4. High school and college students should participate in educational decisions and student governance. They should also participate in broad-based policy decisions by having representation on educational boards at all levels and in governmental agencies,

such as the U.S. Office of Education. As members of the community, they should be indispensable participants in sound decision-making. In those instances where students are not voting members, steps should be taken to move toward giving them voting representation.

5. Special consideration should be given for the needs of exceptional students. Schools should reduce as much as possible the programs which isolate the exceptional student and make a maximum effort to integrate him into the regular life of schools and colleges. This will necessitate paying special attention to physical facilities, special equipment and materials and specially trained personnel.

6. Teacher education must prepare the teacher and potential teacher to understand himself and his students, to cope with the present difficult school situation as it really exists and to instill within the teacher the motivation and knowledge of how to improve the situation. Competence in both academic and vocational instruction must combine knowledge and skill in the field with high teaching performance.

7. Traditional learning methods must be altered to throw a greater burden of routine knowledge dissemination on modern technology, while making faculty more available for counseling and smaller or individualized learning situations, and for humanizing the educational process.

8. The government should place great emphasis on funding experimental and innovative models because the need for change in educational institutions is so great and the obstacles to change so formidable.

9. Schools and colleges must review more systematically their educational objectives and the way in which teaching personnel are meeting those objectives. Ways must be found to more easily shift away from outdated objectives or personnel who cannot contribute to meeting new objectives.

10. The government, supported by the people, must revise national, state, and local spending priorities to support the recommendations outlined above. Schools and colleges must also re-allocate their resources to fund current rather than outdated needs in order to resolve the problem of school financing which has reached crisis proportions.

MAY 28 1971